

Message Text

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12

ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 ADP-00 AID-20 CIAE-00 DODE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00

PA-03 RSC-01 USIA-15 PRS-01 AGR-20 EB-11 RSR-01 /095 W

----- 091054

P R 150841Z AUG 73

FM AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 444

INFO AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

AMEMBASSY DACCA

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FOLL TEL SENT ACTION AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD INFO AMCONSUL KARACHI
FROM AMCONSUL LAHORE AUG 13 REPEATED TO YOU:

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE LAHORE 0955

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: EAGR, SWEL, PK

SUBJECT: PUNJAB FLOOD SITUATION

REF: LAHORE 0948, 0950, 0951

BEGIN SUMMARY: PUNJAB FLOODS APPEAR TO HAVE PEAKED
OVER WEEKEND AND WATERS NOW RECEDING MOST AREAS. HOWEVER,
RIVERS REMAIN HIGH, WATER STILL STANDS IN MANY FIELDS
AND TOWNS, SEVERAL RIVER DIKES ARE BREACHED, MORE WATER
IS EXPECTED FROM IDNAIN HEADWATERS OF CHENAB AND RAVI
RIVERS AND WEATHER FORECAST INDICATES MORE RAIN OVER
NEXT TWO OR THREE DAYS. DISASTER OFFICIALS INDICATED
RADIO, TV AND GOVERNMENT-CONTROLLED PRESS ACCOUNTS OF
FLOODS GENERALLY ACCURATE BUT THEY DECRY OTHER PRESS
ACCOUNTS AS SENSATIONAL, INDICATING THAT POLITICIANS
ATTEMPTING TO GAIN ADVANTAGE FROM TROUBLES. DEATH TOLL
APPARENTLY REMAINS LOW AMONG BOTH HUMANS AND ANIMALS,
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BUT THERE IS CONSIDERABLE LOSS OF HOUSING, CROPS AND

OTHER PROPERTY. ARMY HAS BEEN ASSIGNED TO FLOOD RELIEF WORK AS HAVE LOCAL POLITICIANS BUT RELIEF EFFORTS MAY BE HAMPERED BY LACK OF SUFFICIENT BOATS AND AIRCRAFT AS WELL AS BY BREACHES IN BOTH RAIL LINES AND ROADS. END SUMMARY.

1. TROUBLE SPOTS: A. SIALKOT DISTRICT -- LARGE AREA OF DISTRICT UNDER WATER AND MANY PEOPLE AND ANIMALS MAROONED ON HIGH SPOTS AND TOPS OF BUILDINGS. HOWEVER, ARMY IS HELPING LOCAL CIVIL AND SOCIAL ORGANIZATIONS IN RESCUE AND RELIEF WORK.

B. GUJARANWALA DISTRICT -- WAZIRABAD TOWN COMPLETELY INUNDATED AND BOTH HIGHWAY AND RAILROAD COMPLETELY BREACHED BETWEEN WAZIRABAD AND GUJRAT (APPARENTLY ON BOTH SIDES OF CHENAB). SHAHDARA AND SHARAPUR TOWNS (BOTH ON RIGHT BANK OF RAVI -- SHAHDARA IS JUST ACROSS RIVER FROM DOWNTOWN LAHORE) ARE BOTH INUNDATED. ELECTRICAL POWER HOUSE AND GRID STATION AT SHAHDARA BOTH UNDER WATER AND SHUT DOWN, CUTTING OFF POWER SUPPLY TO INDUSTRIAL PLANTS ON GRAND TRUNK ROAD AS WELL AS SOME IN LAHORE.

C. JHANG DISTRICT -- CHINIOT TEHSIL COMPLETELY CUT OFF FROM OUTSIDE WORLD. CHENAB DIKES WERE BLOWN BY AUTHORITIES IN SEVERAL PLACES TO SAVE HEADWORKS TRIMMU CANAL FROM INUNDATION.

D. MULTAN DISTRICT -- SEVERAL TEHSILS BADLY HIT BY CHENAB, PARTICULARLY SHUJAABAD.

E. RAHIM YAR KHAN DISTRICT -- THOUGH REPORTS ARE SKETCHY, GENERAL CONSENSUS IS THAT MUCH OF DISTRICT IS UNDER WATER AS ARE PARTS OF D.G. KHAN ACROSS INDUS AT MITHANKOT WHERE WATERS FROM JHELM, CHENAB, RAVI AND SUTLEJ COMBINE AS PUNJAB INTO INDUS.

2. OVERALL DAMAGE: ALL OFFICIAL SOURCES CLAIM LESS THAN 50 HUMAN DEATHS REPORTED, THOUGH SOME PAPERS AND OTHER UNOFFICIAL SOURCES ESTIMATE DEATH FIGURE IN HUNDREDS. ALL SOURCES AGREE "SEVERAL THOUSAND HOUSES" HAVE BEEN DEMOLISHED AND PAK TIMES CLAIMS THAT "THOUSANDS OF VILLAGES HAVE BEEN COMPLETELY WAHSED AWAY." ALL SOURCES REPORTED WIDESPREAD LOSSES IN STANDING CROPS INCLUDING FODDER, COTTON, VEGETABLES AND CEREALS AND SOME LOSS OF GRAIN AND SUGAR STORES. MANY SECONDARY ROADS REMAIN INUNDATED AND GRAND TRUNK ROAD BETWEEN RAWALPINDI AND LAHORE HAS BEEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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BREACHED IN AT LEAST TWO PLACES, AS HAS RAIL LINE. 11:30 RADIO BULLETIN AUGUST 13 REPORTED ATTEMPT TO INSTALL TEMPORARY BRIDGES OVER HIGHWAY BRIDGES OF WAZIRABAD AND EXPRESSED HOPE THAT GRAND TRUNK ROAD COULD BE REOPENED BY AUGUST 14.

3. RELIEF ATTEMPTS: NUMBER OF ARMY UNITS HAVE BEEN CALLED INTO ACTION THROUGHOUT PUNJAB AND ARE PARTICIPATING

IN VARIETY OF ACTIONS FROM AIRDROPS TO BOAT RESCUES TO TEMPORARY BRIDGE BUILDING. PUNJAB GOVERNOR KHAR IS REPORTED TO BE SURVEYING PROVINCE BY HELICOPTER TODAY AND HAS APPOINTED FOUR PROVINCIAL MINISTERS TO SUPERVISE RELIEF EFFORTS IN DISTRICTS OF PROVINCE. ALL PROVINCIAL MPAS HAVE BEEN ORDERED TO RETURN TO THEIR VILLAGES AT ONCE TO ASSIST IN RELIEF OPERATIONS AND PROVINCIAL MNAS HAVE BEEN ASKED TO RETURN TO PUNJAB AS SOON AS THEIR NATIONAL ASSEMBLY DUTIES ALLOW.

4. OUTLOOK: EMERGENCY FLOOD RELIEF CELL INFORMED CONGEN AT NOON AUGUST 13 THAT, WHILE CHENAB RIVER HAS FALLEN SOMEWHAT IN SIALKOT DISTRICT AND DOWN AS FAR AS CHINIOT, RIVER REMAINS AT VERY HIGH FLOOD AT JHANG AND AT TRIMMU AND THEY FEEL SITUATION DOWNSTREAM OF TRIMMU MAY WORSEN IN NEXT 12 TO 24 HOURS. WHILE RAVI HAS FALLEN SOMEWHAT AT LAHORE, THEY NOTED SLIGHT RISE IN RIVER AT JASSAR ON INDO-PAK BORDER AND NOTED REPORTS OF CONTINUING RAIN AND HIGH WATER IN INDIAN KASHMIR. OFFICIALS ALSO NOTED CONTINUING WEATHER FORECASTS OF RAIN OVER NEXT TWO TO THREE DAYS AND SAID THEY AGREED WITH EXPERTS QUOTED IN THE PRESS THAT ANOTHER WAVE OF FLOODS COULD BE EXPECTED TOWARDS END OF MONTH (HOWEVER, THEY ALSO AGREED WITH CONGEN LOCAL THAT FLOODS COULD COME SOONER AS RAINS CONTINUED IN INDIAN CATCHMENT AREAS.

5. COMMENT: RATHER FRANTIC ATMOSPHERE IN EMERGENCY FLOOD RELIEF CELL APPEARS TO HAVE DISSIPATED SOMEWHAT SINCE LAST SATURDAY, ALTHOUGH OFFICIALS REMAIN EXTREMELY CONCERNED. SO FAR NO RPT NO REQUESTS HAVE BEEN MADE OF CONGEN FOR ANY ASSISTANCE.
GRIFFIN UNQUOTE SOBER

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